

The
Agony of
Victory

By Pastor Joel Hayes

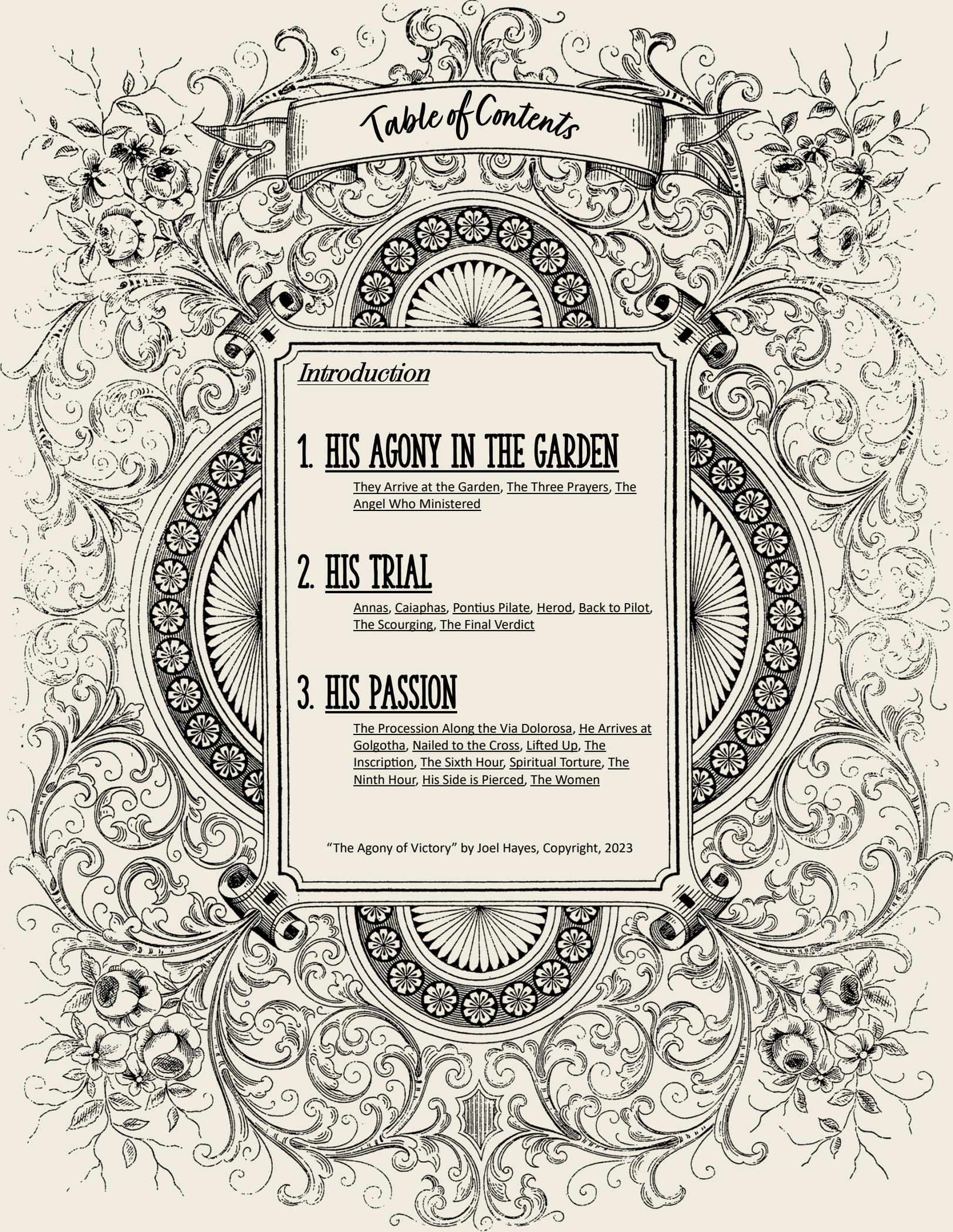


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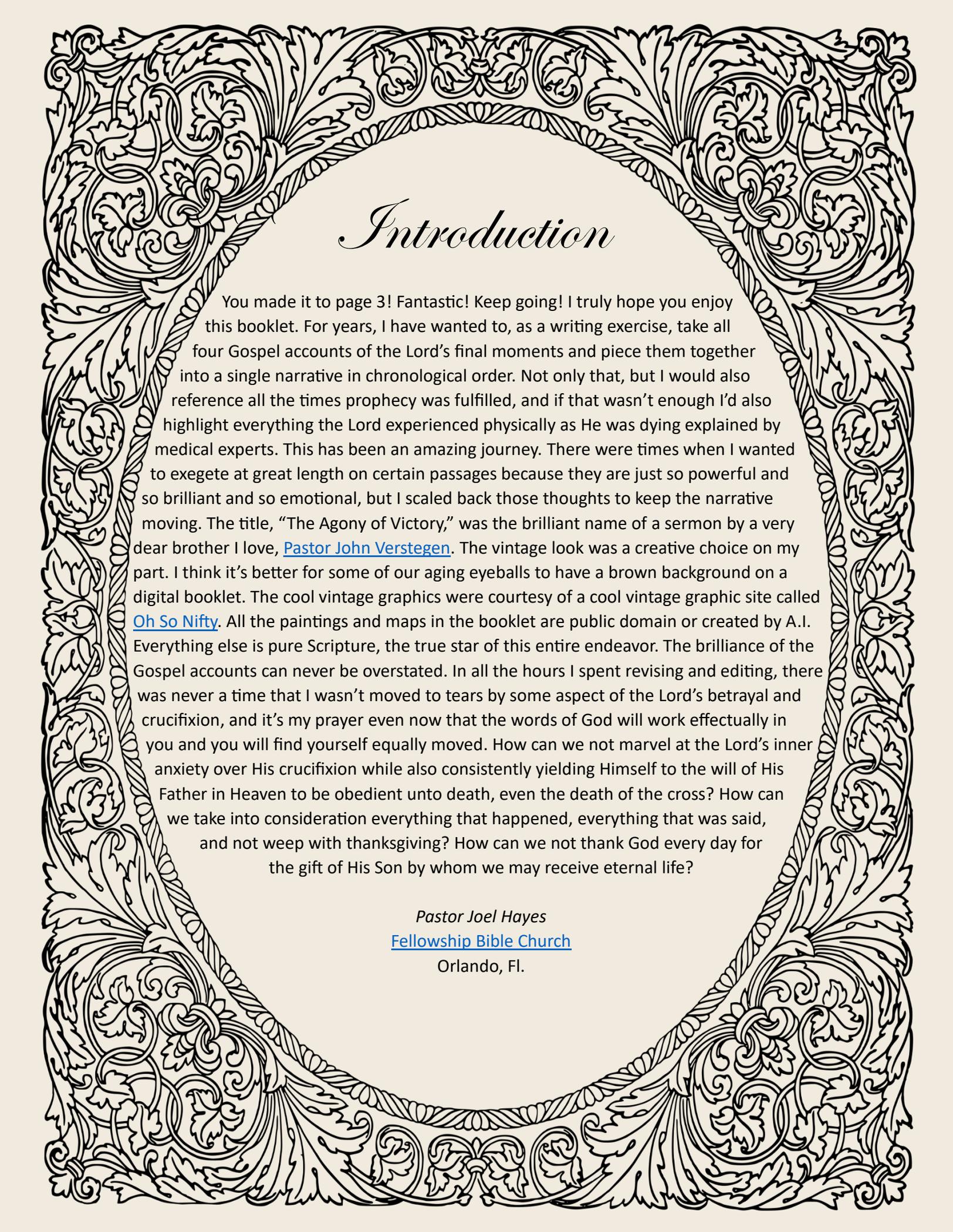
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Introduction

You made it to page 3! Fantastic! Keep going! I truly hope you enjoy this booklet. For years, I have wanted to, as a writing exercise, take all four Gospel accounts of the Lord's final moments and piece them together into a single narrative in chronological order. Not only that, but I would also reference all the times prophecy was fulfilled, and if that wasn't enough I'd also highlight everything the Lord experienced physically as He was dying explained by medical experts. This has been an amazing journey. There were times when I wanted to exegete at great length on certain passages because they are just so powerful and so brilliant and so emotional, but I scaled back those thoughts to keep the narrative moving. The title, "The Agony of Victory," was the brilliant name of a sermon by a very dear brother I love, [Pastor John Verstegen](#). The vintage look was a creative choice on my part. I think it's better for some of our aging eyeballs to have a brown background on a digital booklet. The cool vintage graphics were courtesy of a cool vintage graphic site called [Oh So Nifty](#). All the paintings and maps in the booklet are public domain or created by A.I. Everything else is pure Scripture, the true star of this entire endeavor. The brilliance of the Gospel accounts can never be overstated. In all the hours I spent revising and editing, there was never a time that I wasn't moved to tears by some aspect of the Lord's betrayal and crucifixion, and it's my prayer even now that the words of God will work effectually in you and you will find yourself equally moved. How can we not marvel at the Lord's inner anxiety over His crucifixion while also consistently yielding Himself to the will of His Father in Heaven to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? How can we take into consideration everything that happened, everything that was said, and not weep with thanksgiving? How can we not thank God every day for the gift of His Son by whom we may receive eternal life?

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CHAPTER 1

His Agony in the Garden

***“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:
nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”***

(Matt. 26:39)

We’re given three accounts of the Lord’s famous prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46, Luke 22:39-46, and Mark 14:32-42). John would skip over His prayers altogether and go straight to the betrayal and the arrest.

Let’s read Matthew’s account:

³⁶ “Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. ³⁷ And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. ³⁸ Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. ³⁹ And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. ⁴⁰ And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. ⁴² He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. ⁴³ And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into

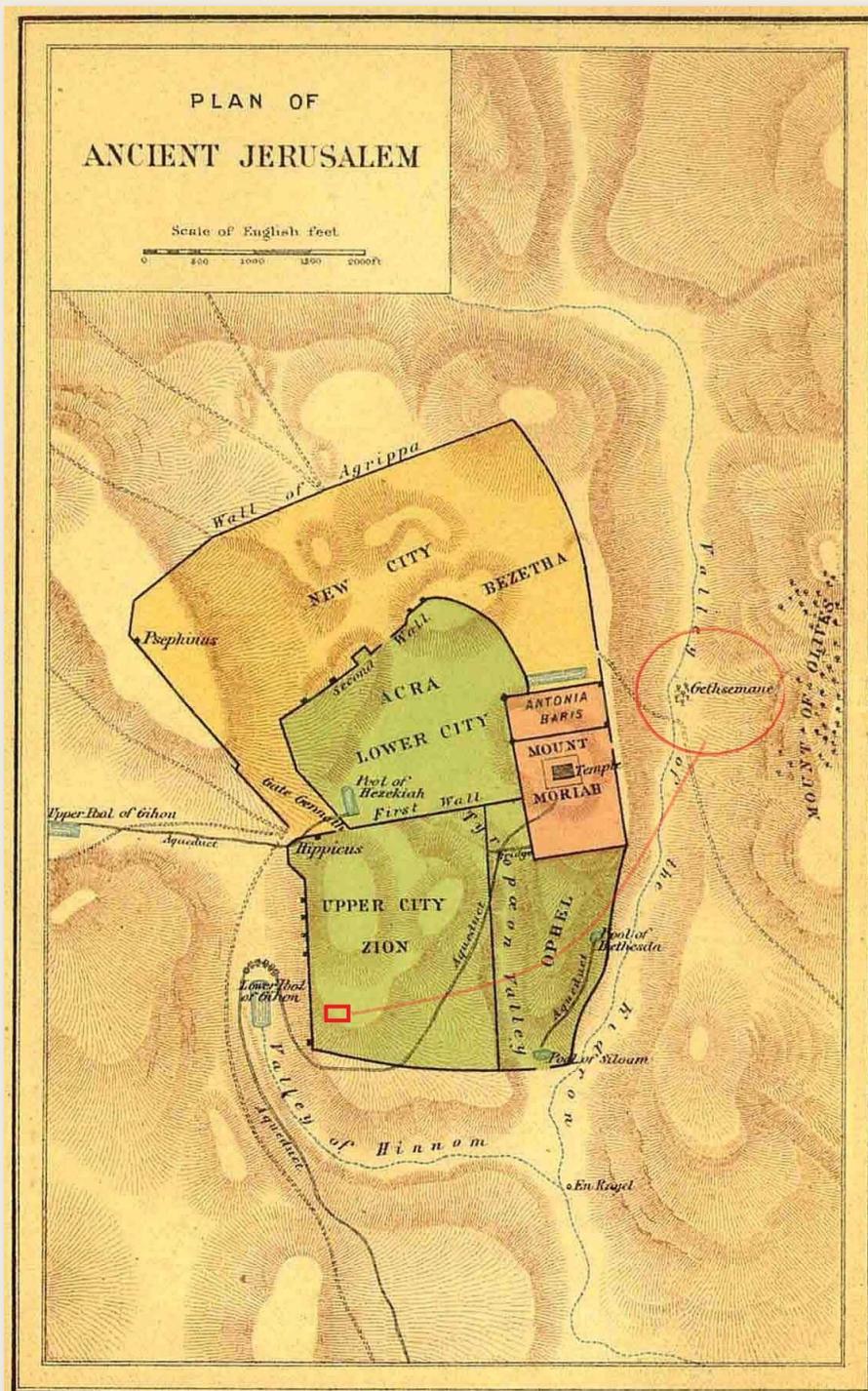
the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.”

(Matt. 26:36-46)

First, Matthew 26:36 and Mark 14:32 would say that the Lord went to Gethsemane. Luke 22:39 would say that He went to the Mount of Olives. John would write that He went “*over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples*” (Joh. 18:1).

They’re all talking about the same location. The Lord went to the Garden of Gethsemane, which was at the foot of the Mount of Olives overlooking the valley of Cedron (now spelled Kidron). If you were to examine a good map of Jerusalem in the time of Jesus, you’ll notice that the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane are behind the wall on the upper eastern side of Jerusalem. This spot is about half a mile away from the wall of Jerusalem. The Mount is about a mile long, overhanging the city of Jerusalem (rising 187 feet above Mount Zion, 295 feet above Mount Moriah, and 443 feet above Gethsemane).

Within Jerusalem, south of Herod’s Palace we’d find what is traditionally considered to be the location of the



upper room. The Lord and His disciples likely walked from that upper room, probably through an eastern gate in the wall, across the brook in the valley of Kidron, and then north into the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

Kevin Sadler, President of the Berean Bible Society, once wrote of his time there. He said, "At the base of the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane, where our Lord fervently prayed in the hours before He was crucified. Looking down into the valley below, it struck me that I was looking at the Kidron Valley. The Lord crossed that valley many times when He stayed in Jerusalem overnight on the Mount of Olives (John 8:1-2). This is the Valley of Decision, the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1,2,14- 16), where the multitudes from the army of the Anti-Christ will be gathered for the Battle of Armageddon. That battle will extend for 200 miles (Rev. 14:20), from Mount Megiddo in the north to Edom in the south. The Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives will be the center of the action when Christ returns at His Second Coming."¹

The Lord clearly loved going to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane. Luke 22:39 tells us that He "*went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives.*" John 18:2 would tell us that "*Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.*" I suspect the Lord loved the Mount of Olives largely because of its rich historical and prophetic significance.

The Scriptures first tell us about the Mount of Olives in 2 Sam. 15, in which Absalom usurped David's throne. David had to flee Jerusalem. The first place he went was the Mount of Olives. There, he wept. Then, in 1 Kings 11, the Mount of Olives would be called "*The Mount of Corruption*" because Solomon built altars to idols, all of which would be destroyed by Josiah, the boy king, in 2 Kings 23. It took a boy to fix the mistakes of the wisest man who ever lived.

Of course, we have the famous prophecies about the Mount of Olives. Eze. 11:23² tells of the Lord's magnificent ascension from and descension onto the Mount of Olives, but my favorite passage is Zech. 14:4. "*And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*" That is just astonishing! The moment when the Lord returns and His foot touches the Mount of Olives, there is going to be a colossal explosion of the entire mountain, which is a mile long, and that whole mountain is going to be split in two creating a massive valley.

When the Lord first entered Jerusalem, He came by way of Bethpage and Bethany (Mark 11:1), which is a road north of the Mount of Olives.

During the day, the Lord taught in the temple. "*At night,*" Luke 21:37 tells us, "*He went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.*"

Plus, all those famous passages in Matt. 24-25 about the end of the world, called "the Olivet Discourse," of course, took place on the Mount of Olives (Matt. 24:3).

After the Lord's resurrection, it was upon the Mount of Olives in Acts 1:6 that the disciples asked Him, "*wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" The Lord said,

¹ Sadler, Kevin. "In the Footsteps of Christ." *Berean Searchlight*, Oct. 2018: Page 12.

² "*And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.*" Ezek. 11:23.

“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7). Then, He reminds them about the power they’ll be receiving from the Spirit, and in Acts 1:9-11, we learn that *“when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”*

It’s easy to see why the Lord loved the Mount of Olives.



Art from Bing Image Creator, “A Painting from the Renaissance Period of the Garden of Gethsemane,” 2023

They Arrive at the Garden

After they arrive at the Garden of Gethsemane, the first thing Jesus tells His disciples is, *“Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder”* (Matt. 26:36). Mark would write that He told the disciples, *“Sit ye here, while I shall pray”* (Mark 14:32). Why is the wording of those two instructions different? Did the Lord say what was recorded in Matthew or Mark? Yes. The Lord spoke a lot. Not everything is recorded. We’re only given snippets. Plus, we know the Lord repeated Himself. Thus, He made both of those statements just as they are written.

Then the Lord left the disciples where they were and brought with Him further into the garden Peter, James, and John (Matt. 26:37, Mark 14:33). In Matthew and Mark, with minor variance, He tells them, *“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.”* He leaves them. He walks further into the garden about the distance of a stone’s throw (Luke 22:41). Some have suggested that a stone’s throw is about 50 or 60 steps.

Why did the Lord do this? Why did He leave eight of His disciples where they were? Why did He take Peter, James, and John further into the garden, only to leave them, walk 50 more steps, fall down, and pray?

Some would say He needed two or three witnesses. Why only two or three witnesses when He could’ve easily had 11?

Peter, James, and John are sometimes referred to as the Lord’s “inner circle.” They were among the earliest to become His disciples, which meant they had been with Him the longest. The Lord took those three up to the high mountain to view His transfiguration. In Luke 8, the

three of them witnessed the Lord bring Jairus's daughter back from the dead. And here, they have been brought to be near the Lord as He agonized in prayer to His Father in the garden.

Why? I suspect that, based upon their faith and service, they had been designated by God for special leadership roles in the kingdom, which is why they're being singled out.

What were the qualities in those three men that persuaded the Lord to single them out? We're not told. We can only say that when we're in our heavenly seats (Eph. 2:6) playing an administrative role in the Lord's kingdom (1 Cor. 6:2-3) and we're seeing those three men on their thrones fulfilling their God-given responsibilities, *then* we will know all.

The Lord tells Peter, James, and John, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.*" The Lord has a soul, the "real you." His whole being, the core of His essence, was in a state of extreme turmoil about everything that was to come to pass. When He says His soul "*is exceeding sorrowful unto death*", He's not saying that He's sorrowful *until* He dies. He's saying that He felt a sorrow so great, His emotional state could literally bring about the death of His body right then, which would be evidenced later by the fact that He was sweating "*as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground*" (Luke 22:44). Luke, the great doctor, the one who emphasizes the Lord's humanity in his Gospel, was the only one to reveal the physical repercussions of His extremities of agony in the garden.

The agony He felt wasn't even the beginning of His cup of sorrows either. This was sorrow over *the cup that He was about to drink*. After Judas and his men show up later and Peter slices off Malchus's ear, the Lord will tell Peter to put away his sword (Joh. 18:11). Then He says, "*the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*" He hadn't even begun to drink of that excruciating cup of sorrows yet.

What was it about that cup that evoked such extreme sorrow in the Lord in the garden? Consider first the fact that His sacrifice on the cross was to take on the consequence of all sin for all mankind for all time (Heb. 10:10). This was more than just physical suffering, although His physical suffering was extraordinary. I'm reminded of Isa. 52:14, "*As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men...*" His visage, His face, as well as the external appearance of His body would be disfigured beyond all recognition, more than any other in the history of mankind.

But His agony was even worse than that.

He also faced extreme mental, emotional, and above all, *spiritual* suffering. He suffered on that cross at Calvary as if He alone was responsible for every sin that was ever committed. Can we even reasonably conceive of His depths of anguish over His punishment for all sin?

Arno Gaebelein would write, "He suffered in Himself. His holy soul shrank back from that which a holy God must hate, that which He hated -- SIN. He was about to be made sin and He knew no sin. What suffering this produced in the Holy One of God to take all upon Himself and to stand in the sinner's place before a holy sin-hating God, our poor finite minds cannot realize."³ His connection *to* all sin and His suffering *for* all sin makes the cross the greatest suffering any being ever experienced in the history of the world.

³ Gaebelein, Arno. "The Work of Christ, Past, Present and Future", ([Internet Archive](#), 2011) Page 9

But His agony was even worse than that.

We know that the other men on crosses experienced physical suffering, but the Lord also experienced extraordinary spiritual suffering beyond all human comprehension. Psa. 22 in part pulls back the spiritual curtain to reveal the demonic realm that was also present at the cross and tortured His soul (Psa. 22:12-13). You may also recall in Isa. 53:11 the Father observing the travailing of the Lord's soul by which He would be satisfied that His Son's sacrifice would be a sufficient propitiation for all the sins of all mankind for all time.

What depths of suffering did *His soul* have to endure to be deemed a sufficient payment for all the sins of all mankind? Who can comprehend that?

Yet, there was another aspect of His sacrifice that took the Lord to the extremes of sorrow, which put His physical body at risk of death in the garden, and that was knowing that He would be forsaken of His Father while on the cross. Above all the other aspects, I suspect this is what took the Lord near the edge. We cannot comprehend the anguish of *anticipation* of the magnitude of *all* His sufferings on the cross while also being forsaken of His Father. He had been one with the Father going all the way back to eternity past (John 17:5). The Lord knows that as He takes on the iniquity of us all, He'll be forsaken of the Father, because He knows His Father can have nothing to do with sin. I'll bet the very thought of that was enough to make Christ sorrowful unto death. Everything could have been almost tolerable if He just wouldn't be forsaken of His Father while He suffered the worst agony of anyone who ever lived.

The Lord in the garden goes out to pray three times. He comes back to Peter, James, and John three times. On that third occasion of His return to His inner circle, that is the moment when Judas and his men would show up to arrest Him.

Let's go through this event moment-by-moment.

First, He tells Peter, James, and John, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.*" Watch what exactly? He means, "Be obedient keeping a lookout until My return." Keep a lookout as He prays. Watch the other disciples to make sure they're where they're supposed to be. Watch for Judas and his men. And watch for His return.

The Lord goes further into the Garden about 50 steps. Matthew would say that He "*fell on his face*" (Matt. 26:39). Mark would say He "*fell on the ground*" (Mark 14:35). Luke would say He "*kneeled down*" (Luke 22:41). This was not about having a proper prayer posture. The Lord collapsed to the ground because of the extremities of agony He felt.

In His first prayer, Matthew records that He said, "*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt*" (Matt. 26:39). Mark would record that He said, "*Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt*" (Mark 14:36). Luke would record only one of His three prayers. We don't know which one, but he writes that Jesus said, "*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done*" (Luke 22:42).

The Lord comes back to Peter, James, and John. He finds them asleep. He speaks to Peter. He says, "*What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (Matt. 26:40-41). Mark would record that He said, "*Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and*

pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:37-38). He made both of those statements in those words. He said a lot to His disciples. We're only given selected portions of what He said.

How fascinating that the Lord talks about watching and praying with Him for one hour. It's not that an hour had passed by the time He came back to them. It's that they were in His last hour before He would be arrested. The Lord wanted them watching with Him for that entire hour. The Lord knew exactly when He would be arrested. John 18:4 tells us that Jesus knew "*all things that would come upon Him.*" He knew Judas would betray Him. He knew how and why. He also knew exactly when He would be arrested. Thus, He knew that He was in the last hour before His arrest, and He wanted His disciples to be alert throughout that hour.

The Lord had also told them, "*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" What did He mean by that exactly?

We have three components in this one verse. We have a willing spirit, a weak flesh, and we have a great risk of falling into temptation.

First, the willing spirit. He knew their souls were eager to serve Him, *but the flesh is weak*. When the Lord said *the flesh is weak*, did He mean that sinful flesh is always susceptible to temptation, or did He mean that their bodies were just tired? Yes. The Lord knew that when their bodies were exhausted, they were also particularly susceptible to temptation, which is why He warned them to "*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*", which is also interesting. The Lord didn't even want them to *enter into* temptation. Why is that? Is it a sin to be tempted? No. Even the Lord was tempted in all points like as we are, yet He was without sin (Heb. 4:15). It's the decision you make *when* you are tempted that could become a sin. But in this moment, the Lord didn't even want them to *enter into* temptation and warns them that the "*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*". He knew that their souls had a willing desire inside of them to serve Him, but He also knew that when their sin-corrupted bodies were exhausted, they were also particularly susceptible to temptation, which meant they'd be highly susceptible to sin, and He didn't want them to even be tempted to sin.

What kind of temptation was the Lord worried about? What was the sin He was concerned they'd be tempted to commit? If they didn't pray and fell asleep, that would be a sin.

How? Because they'd be disobeying the Lord. If the Lord told them to do something and they didn't do it, that was a sin. He was the Messiah. He was Jehovah God. If they didn't do exactly what He said, they sinned. The Lord wanted His disciples to stay awake and pray with Him. He didn't want them to even be tempted to fall asleep. Why? Because the Lord knew what was about to happen. He knew Judas was coming with men to arrest Him, which would ultimately lead to His crucifixion. The Lord wanted His disciples alert, awake, and in prayer in the last hour before His arrest. If they didn't obey His instructions, they sinned.

The Lord goes back into the garden to pray a second time. Matthew records that He said, "*O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done*" (Matt. 26:42). Mark says that He "*spake the same words*" from His first prayer (Mark 14:39).

The Lord comes back to Peter, James, and John. They're asleep again. This time, He lets them sleep.

He goes back into the garden to pray a third time (Matt. 26:43, Mark 14:40). Matthew writes that the Lord said the same words again (Matt. 26:44).

He comes back to Peter, James, and John. Mark records that He tells them *“Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand”* (Mark 14:41-42).



Art from Bing Image Creator, "A Painting from the Baroque Period of the Garden of Gethsemane," 2023

The Three Prayers

In His first prayer, Matthew records that the Lord said, *“O my Father, IF it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt”* (Matt. 26:39). That’s a big IF. The Lord isn’t saying “I won’t do this.” He’s saying, “I don’t want to do this. *IF it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*” He’s giving His Father in Heaven a wide berth for any possibility to get Him out of the suffering to come. Yet, in the same breath, He also instantly acquiesces to His Father’s will. He says, *“nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”* J.C. O’Hair would

write, “Sin is saying to God ‘I will’ instead of ‘Thy will’. Because the anointed cherub said, ‘I will’ in Heaven, the Anointed Son of God in Gethsemane, had to say, ‘Thy will.’”⁴

In this moment, we see like no other the greatest conflict between the Lord’s humanity (Gal. 4:4) and His divinity (John 1:1). In His divinity, He knew the will of the Father and what had to be done on the cross. He had a full understanding of the sufferings about to befall Him. He knew beforehand about the treachery of Judas, the betrayal of Peter, the hatred, the rejection, and the false witnesses of His own people. He knew that He would in a few hours be whipped, beaten, spit upon, crowned with thorns, His beard ripped off His face (Isa. 50:6), nailed to the cross, but worst of all, He’d be temporarily forsaken of His Father for the first time because the sins of the world would be laid upon Him. His soul was sorrowful unto death fulfilling the prophecy of Isa. 53:3 that He would be *“despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows.”*

So, in His *humanity*, He cried out, *‘O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from*

⁴ O’Hair, J.C. “Why Did God Create the Devil?”, [Twenty Questions and Bible Answers](#), Page 1

me.” But He knew the answer. Was it a sin for Him to not want to go to the cross? Of course not. In His humanity, He openly shared all His desires and anguish with His Father in Heaven. And yet in both His humanity *and* in His divinity, He fully *chose* to acquiesce to the will of the Father. “*Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*” He freely submitted His whole being to the will of the Father. Christ, all of Him, all that He was, chose to obey. He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). And here in the Garden of Gethsemane, He knew in Himself, in His divinity, the will of His father. Yet, He cried repeatedly in His humanity, “*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*” “*Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me...*” “*Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me.*”

Could Christ have said “no” to the cross? The Lord would soon tell Peter that, if He so chooses, He could call twelve legions of angels to stop all that nonsense (Matt. 26:53). The Lord told Peter, and by extension all of us, that He was making a choice to go to the cross.

In His incarnation, in His condescension, the Lord was fully God *and* fully man. He had no sin in Him (Rom. 8:3). Yet there were others, like Lucifer and Adam, who also had no sin in them, but they chose to sin. Jesus, on the other hand, *chose* to *not* sin every day, and He *chose* to go to the cross. If it was His choice to go, then it was also His choice to not go.

Why should Paul praise His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:7-8), if disobedience was impossible? The Lord learned obedience through the things He suffered (Heb. 5:8). How could he *learn* obedience if there was no open door to disobedience? How could He *feel* temptation if there was no possibility to succumb to it?

On the other hand, who but Jesus, Jehovah-Messiah, could be said to *yield up* or *dismiss* His own spirit? It was He who had before asserted calmly His full authority when He said, “*I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again*” (John 10:17-18).

Yet, because of His hypostatic union (Heb. 1:3) being both fully God *and* fully man, the Lord had to willfully chose obedience unto death. In that Garden of Gethsemane, the Lord had to willfully refuse to save Himself so He might fulfill all righteousness and save all of us who would trust in Him by faith (2 Cor. 5:21). The Lord’s choice to not sin, His choice to obey His Father all the way to the cross, makes His love sacrifice for us even more *personal*, even more *glorious*, even more *astounding*, because He made that choice for you.

I loved how William Kelly wrote, “From this table our Lord goes to Gethsemane, and His agony there. Whatever there was of sorrow, whatever there was of pain, whatever there was of suffering, our Lord never bowed to any suffering from men without, before He bore it on His heart alone with His Father. He went through it in spirit before He went through it in fact... Thence our Lord goes forth; not yet to suffer the wrath of God, but to enter into it in spirit *before* God... As the cross was of all the deepest work and suffering, so most assuredly the Lord did not enter upon Calvary without a previous Gethsemane.”⁵

⁵ Kelly, William. “Matthew – Introductory,” in the *Introductory Lectures on the Gospels*, Page 59.

The Angel Who Ministered

Whereas more than one angel ministered to Christ after the tempting in the wilderness, only one angel ministers to Christ in the garden. Luke is the only one who would provide details about this encounter. *“And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (Luke 22:43-44).

We learn, first of all, in vs. 43 that *“there appeared an angel unto him from heaven”*. The angel was sent from Heaven to personally be with Christ. This was during His prayer, perhaps His third prayer. The angel strengthened Him. The appearance of the angel and the strengthening He received, didn't stop the Lord from praying. He continued praying *“all the more earnestly”* after being strengthened because of the extreme depths of agony He felt.

Three things occurred here. The angel appeared. He strengthened Him while He was praying. The Lord, now strengthened, prays *all the more earnestly* because of the agony He felt. When He was strengthened, His reaction was to pray *more earnestly*.

What kind of strengthening are we talking about? Mental, emotional, physical? I'd suggest the angel's strengthening did not help the Lord's mental and emotional state because vs. 44 says, *“being in an agony he prayed more earnestly.”* It would seem that the only kind of strengthening He was given was physical only, borne out by the context, because in the next verse, Luke would describe for us the external physical repercussions of His internal agony: *“And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”*

The expression *“as it were”* is an interesting study. This occurs 43 times in the Bible and conveys that something was like something else. It's descriptive of a similarity. *“This thing over here was kinda like this other thing over here but it wasn't that other thing.”* I suspect that Luke is saying the Lord's sweat was like great drops of blood, but it wasn't great drops of blood. It had the appearance *as it were* of great drops of blood, but it wasn't great drops of blood.

Why would Luke make the connection between sweat and great drops of blood? What does that mean? Most likely, this was sweat mingled with blood that had the appearance of pure blood, but it wasn't pure blood. It was only sweat mingled with blood.

It is possible, albeit rare, for someone to have such anxiety that blood could be mingled with sweat, which is a phenomenon called Hematidrosis or Hemohidrosis. According to the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) and author William D. Edwards, we learn that *“Although this is a very rare phenomenon, bloody sweat (hematidrosis or hemohidrosis) may occur in highly emotional states or in persons with bleeding disorders. As a result of hemorrhage into the sweat glands, the skin becomes fragile and tender. Luke's description supports the diagnosis of hematidrosis rather than eccrine chromidrosis (brown or yellow-green sweat) or stigmatization (blood oozing from the palms or else- where). Although some authors have suggested that hematidrosis produced hypovolemia... Jesus' actual blood loss probably was minimal. However, in the cold night air, it may have produced chills.”*⁶

⁶ Edwards, William D. “On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ,” [Journal of American Medical Association](#). April, 1986.

Should any of us be surprised that the Lord experienced something like Hematochrosis while He agonized in the garden? How could He not? When you consider all the reasons why the Lord was in such agony in the garden, how can we not expect to see some natural form of external evidence to all that internal agony He was going through?

How did the angel strengthen Him physically? This is a curious thing because we have no accounts in Scripture of angels healing anyone, but we have an abundance of verses about miraculous healings by the Spirit through the Lord, His disciples, and even the Apostle Paul.

There is a story in John 5:1-18 of the angel who, at a certain season, came down to stir the pool at Bethesda, and the first person who jumped into that pool was healed.

Why did the angel stir the water?

The miracle at the pool of Bethesda was designed to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah and all the healings *He* would bring them. Whereas the one lucky person who jumped into the pool first was healed, when the Messiah comes, *everyone* would have the opportunity to be healed. God limited the number of healings at the pool so the people would be ready to rejoice evermore at the *unlimited* number of healings by Christ for *all* the people when He arrives. Now that the Messiah has come, no longer would there be limits to the number of people who could be healed. Now they'd have healings without limits, restrictions, or conditions. The healings were not only signs that Christ was the Messiah, but they also painted a portrait of Israel's spiritual poverty and the healing He brings them. Plus, they foreshadowed life in the kingdom and the prophesied restoration of long life (Isa. 35:5-6).

Thus, I believe, the angel who stirred the waters was operating in service of the Holy Spirit who was the One who performed the miracles. The angel stirred the waters, which made everyone know that it was time to jump into the pool. Then the Holy Spirit Himself healed the first one who jumped in, just as Christ and the disciples healed through the Spirit.

Likewise, it may well be possible that the angel who came down from Heaven facilitated a healing by the Holy Spirit just so Christ could physically make it to the cross.

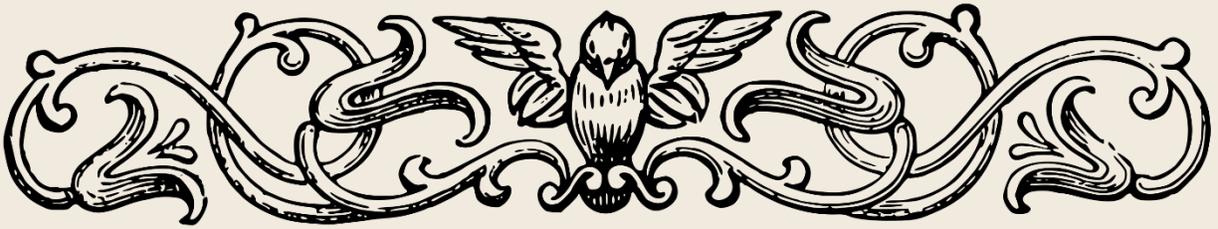
Gethsemane was, for Christ, His moment of choice. As William Kelly wrote, "The Lord did not enter upon Calvary without a previous Gethsemane."⁷ I'd also suggest that the Lord did not enter upon Gethsemane without first having undertaken the tempting in the wilderness. The tempting in the wilderness was the trial run. The Garden of Gethsemane was the actual test, and all of this was the God-ordained process by the Father in which the Lord who faced temptation (Heb. 4:15) would *learn* obedience through the things He suffered (Heb. 5:7-8).

One cannot help but make a connection between the Garden of Gethsemane and the Lord's temptation in the wilderness. In both scenarios, we find the Lord's obedience to the Father put to the test through His suffering. In both scenarios, His humanity was in direct conflict with His divinity. In both scenarios, the Lord's very life was on the line. In both scenarios, the hope of all mankind hung in the balance as Christ, in His most weak and most vulnerable

⁷ Kelly, William. "Mark 9-16", Introductory Lectures on the Gospel of Mark, Page 42

state, was being tempted to betray the will of His Father. In both scenarios, after He chose obedience, angels came down from Heaven to minister unto Him.

And in both scenarios, Christ, in His agony, made the choice of victory.



CHAPTER 2

His Trial

“Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”

(Luke 22:48)

After His agony in the Garden, Judas and many men arrive. John would tell us that Judas “received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees” (John 18:3). It’s generally thought, because of Josephus’ writings, that due to all the people who came to Jerusalem for the Passover, these men that the Pharisees gave to Judas were the usual hired hands, men who were typically paid to help maintain peace amongst the crowds in Jerusalem, which would explain why there were so many of them and why they all had weapons. Matthew and Mark would both tell us that Judas brought with him “a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders” (Matt. 26:47; Mark 14:43).

Matthew and Mark would also quote what Judas said to the men beforehand. Matthew 26:48 cites Judas as telling them, “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.” Mark 14:44 would also cite him as saying, “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.” He made both of those statements. There were a lot of men. Judas had to have repeated himself so they all knew how His arrest would play out.

When they entered the garden, Matthew records Judas approaching Jesus saying, “Hail, master” (Matt. 26:49). Mark records him as saying, “Master, master” (Mark 14:45).

Jesus responded to him and said, “Friend, wherefore art thou come?” (Matt. 26:50), which is an astounding line. John said Jesus *knew all the things that should come upon Him* (John 18:4). He knew what Judas was doing. He knew why. He knew how this would play out. And yet, in this tragic moment, Jesus still willingly engaged Judas in some discourse by asking him a question for which He already knew the answer.

Plus, Jesus publicly called Judas, of all things, a “friend.”

And he was. Despite the fact that he had no faith. Despite the fact that Jesus knew Judas would betray Him for some lousy silver. Despite the fact that Jesus affirming His friendship with Judas would guarantee His arrest. Yet, He still called him a “friend” before all. Because He was.

Despite all that Judas was, Jesus still loved him. He still wanted for Judas what He wants for all men – to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) because He loved him.

“And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

“But Jesus said unto him, ‘Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?’” (Luke 22:47-48). Luke is the only one who would record this line, arguably one of the greatest dramatic lines ever. This is the kind of line that would make Shakespeare salivate with envy. *“Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”* We see in this moment, the sincerest of love extended by Christ to Judas when He called him a *“friend”* before everyone. In response, Judas returns His love with a kiss. A kiss that would seal His death. Jesus was sincere. Judas was a liar.

How the Lord phrased this statement is fascinating. He said, *“betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”* This was more than just Christ asking him, “are you going to betray Me?” This was Christ essentially asking him, “are you going to betray *the Son of Man*? Are you going to betray everything you know I am, the Messiah as descended from Adam? Are you going to betray everything your forefathers suffered and sacrificed so I could be here in the flesh? Are you going to betray the very kingdom that was promised to you and all your kinsmen going back generations, a promise all the prophets spoke of since the world began? Are you going to betray everything the Father wants to accomplish upon this Earth, everything our people have longed for, everything that so many in Israel have come to receive by faith and gave up all their possessions to follow Me, everything that your fellow disciples sacrificed to accomplish? Are you going to betray the entire prophetic program... with a kiss?”

Not least of all, Judas had betrayed himself by living a lie before the Son of God when he knew with absolute certainty that Christ was all that He said He was. Everything everyone had worked so hard for came tumbling down in a moment with the betrayal of a kiss.

Judas didn’t even have the decency to betray Him honestly to His face. He would betray Him through a hypocritical lying gesture. He would weaponize an act of love to become a means of death, the kiss of death. I daresay, a disciple could not have inflicted more pain onto the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ if he had tried.

Christ loved him sincerely. His love is returned with betrayal and death. And all Christ would say was simply, *“Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”* As if to say, “Are you really going to return all my love for you with death for me?” Albert Barnes would write, “Every word of this must have gone to the very soul of Judas.”⁸

Judas didn’t answer His question.

The mob began to close in on Jesus. *“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, ‘Whom seek ye?’ They answered him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus saith unto them, ‘I am he.’ And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, ‘I am he,’ they went backward, and fell to the ground”* (Joh. 18:4-6).

When Christ said, *“I am He,”* this was an assertion of His deity: *“I am that I am.”*

⁸ Barnes, Albert. Notes on the Bible, Luke 22:48, 1832

When all the men fell backward onto the ground, what happened? Did this mean, as some have asserted, that they all bowed down to worship Him? I don't believe so. We're given the impression from these verses that they all fell backward onto the ground, as though a great unseen hand had knocked them over, as if the Spirit pushed them all back.

Why? Because in that moment, anyone who wasn't sure of the veracity of Christ's claims of who He is, they would have no doubt after that. Once they were knocked down, they all knew with certainty that they were dealing with the legitimate Messiah of Israel. And they would all be held accountable to God for their choice in that moment to continue to lay hands upon Him knowing full well that Christ was all that He claimed to be.

John tells us, *"Then asked he them again, 'Whom seek ye?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:' That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, 'Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none'"* (Joh. 18:7-9). This was not a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy but of what the Lord said to the Father in His High Priestly prayer in John 17:12.

What's interesting about that prayer was what the Lord told the Father. He said, *"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."* When the Lord said *"those that thou gavest me I have kept"* we could have interpreted that verse to mean that the Lord was speaking only in a spiritual sense, in the sense that He was preserving their souls unto eternal life. But in the kingdom, the promised blessings were as much physical as they were spiritual. As long as the Lord was in the world, He would protect His disciples both physically and spiritually. When the kingdom was offered again at Pentecost (Acts 3:14-21), they were still protected. However, by the time we get to Paul's conversion and the implementation of a new dispensation of grace (Eph. 3:1-13), Israel had been set aside for a reason and for a season (Rom. 11:15), which meant that the offer of the kingdom is temporarily set aside until the church is caught away (2 Thess. 2:7-12). Thus, by the time we get to Acts 12:1-2, Herod kills James, the brother of John, and the disciples were no longer under that protection.

Luke would tell us the disciples then asked the Lord, *"shall we smite with the sword?"* (Luke 22:49). Peter whips out his sword. He clumsily swings it and cuts off the ear of a servant of the high priest whose name was Malchus (John 18:10). Jesus would tell Peter, *"Suffer ye thus far."* (Luk. 22:51). *"Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* (John 18:11). *"Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"* (Matt. 26:52-54).

He tells Peter to put away his sword and says, *"all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword"* (Matt. 26:52). If your first recourse to circumstances like these is to use violence, then won't violence always be used as retaliation to you and be your downfall?

He references the cup of His Father that He must drink, which was the cup of sorrows, the cup of the wrath of God so He could take on the punishment for all our sins. He tells Peter, *"Shall I not drink it?"* Shall He not be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?

Plus, in this moment, the Lord references angels. He said, *“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”* This reference to angels speaks to His free will. Jesus could have said “no” to all of this nonsense and say “no” to the cross, but He made His choice during His agony in the Garden. He made the choice to fulfill His Father’s will and remain obedient unto death, even though He still had the authority to call on twelve legions of angels and wipe out these faithless traitors. This statement about angels emphasizes not only His continued authority but also His free will choice to consistently obey the will of the Father by sacrificing Himself upon that cross to pay for all the sins of all mankind for all time.

After this, Luke would tell us that Jesus *“touched his ear and healed him”* (Luk. 22:51), which was yet more proof of His deity, His kindness to His enemies, His love shown through miracles to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke would record that Jesus turned to the crowd and said, *“Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled”* (Matt. 26:55-56).

Mark would record that after this, *“all forsook him and fled”* (Mark 14:50). All the disciples saw the writing on the wall and took off running, abandoning Christ to His fate, which had to have been for Him not only relief because they’re safe but also heartbreak.

Annas

We learn from John that Jesus was first taken to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest. Annas was once the high priest, but he had been deposed a few years prior. Yet, he still wielded great power. *“Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year”* (Joh. 18:12-13). We do not know what was said, but we know that Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas and brought before the chief priests, the elders, the scribes, and all the council (a.k.a. the Sanhedrin).

Caiaphas

It’s during Christ’s time with Caiaphas that Peter would deny the Lord three times (Matt. 26:57-58, Mark 14:54, John 18:15-18, Luke 22:54). To quote Baker, “John also informs us that Peter and an unidentified disciple, who was acquainted with the high priest, and whom we believe to have been John himself, followed Jesus to the house of the high priest. John went in with Jesus, but Peter was left standing outside at the door. Then John spoke to the woman tending the door and brought Peter in. This doorkeeper was the first one to confront Peter, which called forth Peter's first denial of Christ and the subsequent first crowing of the cock. It was a cold night and a fire had been kindled in the hall, and Peter stood with the others warming himself. A little later another maid accused Peter of being a disciple of Jesus, which he

denied with an oath, saying that he did not know the man.”⁹



Painting by Carl Heinrich Bloch, "The Denial of Peter," 1873

The hearing before the council begins with some civility. John tells us that *"The high priest (Caiaphas) then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, 'I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.'* And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, 'Answerest thou the high priest so?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?' (Joh. 18:19-23).

Then things really go downhill.

Matthew tells us, *"Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council,*

sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none" (Matt. 26:59-60). Mark would tell us that *"their witness agreed not together"* (Mar. 14:56). They couldn't find collaborating testimonies.

Then Matthew writes, *"At the last came two false witnesses, And said, 'This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.'" (Matt. 26:60-61). Mark records the witness as saying, "'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands'" (Mar. 14:58).*

Following this, *"the high priest arose, and said unto him, 'Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?'*

"But Jesus held his peace.

"And the high priest answered and said unto him, 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God'" (Matt. 26:62-63).

Then Jesus says, *"'If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.' Then said they all, 'Art thou then the Son of God?' And he said unto them, 'Ye say that I am'" (Luke 22:67-70). Astonishing that Christ didn't want to give them the answer they wanted to*

⁹ Baker, Charles F. "The Trial Before the Jewish Authorities," *Understanding the Gospels*, pg. 225.

hear because if He did, they wouldn't believe, and He still wanted them to become believers. If He asked them what they believed, He knew they wouldn't answer Him. Thus, they've reached an impasse, and Christ is doomed to be crucified. Yet, what's truly at stake here is not so much Christ's life as it is the eternal life for all the unbelievers prosecuting Him.

Mark would record yet another exchange. *"Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?'"*

"And Jesus said, 'I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven'" (Mar. 14:61-62).

Matthew would record Him also saying, *"Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven'"* (Mat. 26:64).

Which exchange is the correct one? Both of them. They asked the Lord this question more than once, and the Lord answered them more than once.

After that, *"the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, 'What need we any further witnesses?'"* (Mar. 14:63).

Then the elders ask the council, *"What think ye?"*

"They answered and said, 'He is guilty of death.' Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, Saying, 'Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?'" (Mat. 26:66-68).

At about this point, Judas commits suicide by hanging himself (Matt. 27:5). We would learn later in Acts 1:18 that he had somehow fallen down headlong. *"He burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."*

Pontius Pilate

Easton's Bible Dictionary tell us that Pilate was "Probably connected with the Roman family of the Pontii, and called 'Pilate' from the Latin *pileatus*, i.e., 'wearing the pileus', which was the 'cap or badge of a manumitted slave,' as indicating that he was a 'freedman,' or the descendant of one. He was the sixth in the order of the Roman procurators of Judea (A.D. 26-36). His headquarters were at Caesarea."

Smith's Bible Dictionary points out that "One of his first acts was to move the headquarters of the army from Caesarea to Jerusalem. The soldiers, of course, took with them their standards, bearing the image of the emperor, into the Holy City. No previous governor had ventured on such an outrage. The people poured down in crowds to Caesarea, where the procurator was then residing, and besought him to remove the images. After five days of discussion, Pilate gave the signal to some concealed soldiers to surround the petitioners and put them to death unless they ceased to trouble him; but this only strengthened their determination, and they declared themselves ready rather to submit to death than forego their resistance to an idolatrous [intrusion]. Pilate then yielded, and the standards were, by his orders, brought [back] to Caesarea."

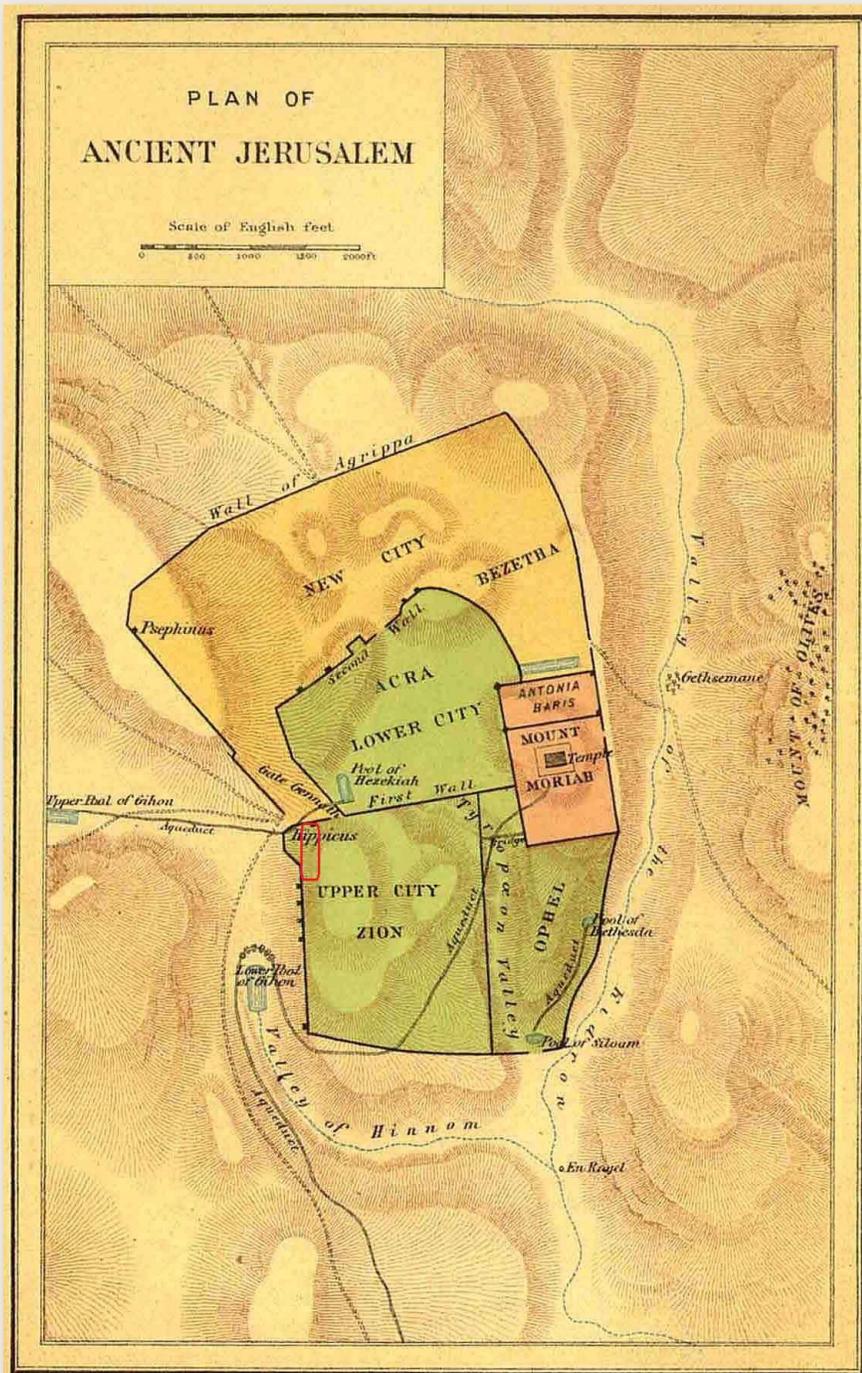
Luke 13:1 highlights how Pilate slaughtered the Galileans. “*There were present at that season some that told [Jesus] of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*” Can you believe that blasphemy? Pilate not only slaughtered many Galileans, but he also mingled their blood with the own sacrifices.

Easton would tell us that Pilate was a “typical Roman, not of the antique, simple stamp,

but of the imperial period, a man not without some remains of the ancient Roman justice in his soul, yet pleasure-loving, imperious, and corrupt. He hated the Jews whom he ruled, and in times of irritation freely shed their blood. They returned his hatred with cordiality, and accused him of every crime, mal-administration, cruelty, and robbery. He visited Jerusalem as seldom as possible; for, indeed, to one accustomed to the pleasures of Rome, with its theatres, baths, games, etc., Jerusalem, with [all of] its religiousness... was a dreary residence.”

Because of the Passover, Pilate was probably staying inside Jerusalem in Herod’s palace, which wasn’t merely a building as much as it was part of a larger *praetorium* compound along the western wall in the upper city, which many scholars agree is the likely location of the Lord’s trial.¹⁰

The Lord makes two appearances before Pilate.



¹⁰ Ngo, Robin. “Tour Showcases Remains of Herod’s Palace – Possible Site of the Trial of Jesus,” [Biblical Archeology](#).

Luke gives the most detailed account of His first appearance. *“And they began to accuse him, saying, ‘We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.’*

“And Pilate asked him, saying, ‘Art thou the King of the Jews?’

“And he answered him and said, ‘Thou sayest it.’

“Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, ‘I find no fault in this man’” (Luke 23:2-4). That sounds like a quick verdict, doesn't it? A whole lot more was said than what we're given. Plus, I would suggest that as soon as anyone so much as looked upon Jesus, the Spirit would convict that person and they would know that there was something special about Him. At the very least He was an innocent man, but if they were honest within themselves, they knew deep down that He truly was the Christ, the Son of God. This may in part explain why Pilate knew quickly and instinctively that Jesus was innocent.

Luke continues. *“And they were the more fierce, saying, ‘He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.’*

“When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time” (Luke 23:5-7).

This may well tie with Luke 13:1 about Pilate slaughtering the Galileans. Because of Pilate's history with the Galileans, they thought they had a good chance that Pilate would be easily convinced to slaughter Jesus, too, but they were wrong. Jesus is taken to

Herod

“And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

“Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

“And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

“And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves” (Luke 23:8-12).

Back to Pilate

We learn in Matthew that when the Lord is brought back to Pilate the stakes are raised. As soon as he sits down on the judgment seat, his wife sends him a message saying, *“Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him”* (Matt. 27:19).

When Jesus is brought before Pilate, he asks Him, *“Art thou the King of the Jews?”*

“And Jesus said unto him, ‘Thou sayest.’

“And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

“Then said Pilate unto him, ‘Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?’ And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly” (Matt. 27:11-14, c.f., Mark 15:1-5).

Matthew and Mark both record that Pilate *“knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy”* (Matt. 27:18, Mark 15:10).

The first thing Pilate tries to do is recuse himself. *“Pilate then went out unto them, and said, ‘What accusation bring ye against this man?’*

“They answered and said unto him, ‘If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.’

“Then said Pilate unto them, ‘Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.’

“The Jews therefore said unto him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put any man to death”” (Joh. 18:29-31). This was a complete falsehood. They many times tried to stone Jesus. They would also later stone Stephen to death in Acts 7 during Pentecost. There was no law saying you could not put someone to death during the Passover. They were only saying these things to Pilate because they feared the people, and they wanted to be able to say, essentially, “We didn’t put Jesus to death. The Romans did it.”

Pilate takes Jesus aside for a private chat. *“Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, ‘Art thou the King of the Jews?’*

“Jesus answered him, ‘Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?’” (Joh. 18:33-34). A phenomenal response. Christ challenges Pilate to personally believe in Him.

“Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?’

“Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence’” (Joh. 18:35-36).

Baker would make the point that “This statement has often been misinterpreted to mean, ‘My Kingdom will not be upon this earth.’ But when Jesus said in His prayer in John 17:16, *‘They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,’* He surely did not mean that neither He nor His disciples were upon the earth. He was declaring that His Kingdom did not



Painting by Antonio Ciseri, "Ecco Homo, Behold the Man," 1871

originate out of this present cosmos-world system. His Kingdom has a heavenly origin, but it will be established upon the earth.”¹¹

“Pilate therefore said unto him, ‘Art thou a king then?’

“Jesus answered, ‘Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice’” (Joh. 18:37).

What did The Lord mean by saying, *“Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice”*? This harkens back to Joh. 8:47 in which the Lord said, *“He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”* In other words, the people of faith who are attentive to the things of God, the people of faith who care about truth, they are the ones who hear God’s words. They are the ones who hear the voice of Christ.

“Pilate saith unto him, ‘What is truth?’

“And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, ‘I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?’

“Then cried they all again, saying, ‘Not this man, but Barabbas’” (Joh. 18:38-40)

Pilate resorts to Plan C. He first tried to send him to Herod. That didn’t work. He tried to recuse himself. That didn’t work. And now we’re on to Plan C. It was customary during the Passover to release a prisoner. Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but the people wouldn’t have any of it. So then Pilate opts to flog Jesus and release Him.

“Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, ‘Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?’

“But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

“The governor answered and said unto them, ‘Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?’

“They said, ‘Barabbas.’

“Pilate saith unto them, ‘What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?’

“They all say unto him, ‘Let him be crucified.’

“And the governor said, ‘Why, what evil hath he done?’

“But they cried out the more, saying, ‘Let him be crucified’” (Matt. 27:16-17,20-23; see also Mark 15:6-15).

In Luke, Pilate tells the chief priests, *“Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him”* (Luk. 23:13-16).

They whipped him, put on Him a purple robe and a crown of thorns. Matthew records that *“they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of*

¹¹ Baker, Charles F. “The Trial Before Pilate,” *Understanding the Gospels*, pg. 228,

thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head" (Matt. 27:28-30, c.f., Mark 15:16-19).

The Scourging

There is an article I have long loved in the April, 1999, issue of the Berean Searchlight called "The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View" by C. Truman Davis, M.D., M.S.

About the Lord's scourging. He writes, "Preparations for the scourging are carried out. The prisoner is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum in His hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back, and legs. At first, the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally, spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. Finally, the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped. The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns (commonly used for firewood) are plaited into the shape of a crown and this is pressed into His scalp. Again, there is copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body)... The soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp."¹²

The pain and blood loss could also set the stage for circulatory shock.¹³

The Final Verdict

After the scourging, John tells us, *"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and they smote him with their hands.*

"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, 'Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.' Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, 'Behold the man!'

"When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, 'Crucify him, crucify him.'

"Pilate saith unto them, 'Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.'

¹² Davis, C. Truman. "The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ," Berean Searchlight. April, 1999, pg. 13

¹³ Edwards, William D. "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," [Journal of American Medical Association](#). April, 1986.

“The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.’

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, ‘Whence art thou?’

“But Jesus gave him no answer.

“Then saith Pilate unto him, ‘Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?’

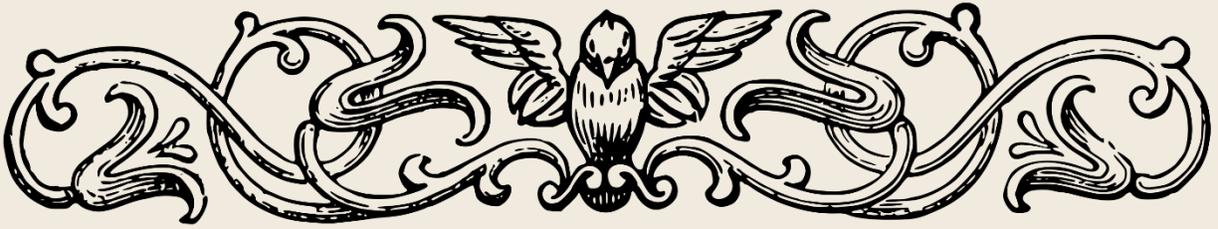
“Jesus answered, ‘Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.’

“And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, ‘If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.’ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’ But they cried out, ‘Away with him, away with him, crucify him.’

“Pilate saith unto them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar’” (Joh. 19:1-15).

Matthew tells us what Pilate did after this. *“When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.’*

“Then answered all the people, and said, ‘His blood be on us, and on our children.’ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified (Mat. 27:24-26, c.f., Luke 23:18-24).



CHAPTER 3

His Passion

¹ **“To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.**
My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? ² O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. ³ But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. ⁴ Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. ⁵ They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. ⁶ But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. ⁷ All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ⁸ He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. ⁹ But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. ¹⁰ I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. ¹¹ Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. ¹² Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. ¹³ They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. ¹⁸ They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. ¹⁹ But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. ²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword; my

darling from the power of the dog. ²¹ Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns."

(Psa. 22:1-21)

We find in the first 21 verses of Psalm 22, the suffering (22:1-21) followed by, in the final 10 verses, the glory (22:22-31), which we'll cover at the end. This Psalm is one of the most sublime prophecies in the entire Bible. We have contained in this Psalm the intimate, inner thoughts of Christ Himself as He suffered on the cross. Plus, we have the spiritual torture that took place and the glory to come all wonderfully foretold.



The Procession Along the Via Dolorosa

Fast forward to Christ carrying His cross in His procession down the Via Dolorosa, which is the route through Jerusalem believed to be the path taken by Jesus on His way to Golgotha, which was roughly 650 yards away. Golgotha is a Hebrew word meaning, "the place of the skull." Luke calls it "Calvary," Latin for "skull".

You might recall the state of Christ after His scourging. He was beaten. Bloody. By this point His beard had been ripped off His face fulfilling the Lord's words

in Isa. 50:6 in which He said, "*I gave my back to the smiters, and*

my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." We're reminded again of Isa. 52:14, "*As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."*

Dr. Davis, in his article, points out that by this point, "the skin of His back is now an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue, stuck to His clothes, now adherent to all the clots of blood and serum in His wounds."¹⁴ The Lord also still had on His head, the crown of thorns,

¹⁴ Ibid. Pg. 13

and there was, as Dr. Davis points out, “copious bleeding because the scalp is one of the most vascular areas of the body...”¹⁵

Other doctors have suggested that the appreciable blood loss likely set the stage for hypovolemic shock evidenced by the fact that Jesus was too weak to carry the patibulum.¹⁶

Dr. Davis now writes that “The heavy patibulum (the crossarm weighing over one hundred pounds) is tied across His shoulders, and the procession... begins... along the Via Dolorosa. In spite of His efforts to walk erect, He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of [His] shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance. [A] centurion, anxious to get on with the crucifixion, selects... Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross...”¹⁷

This moment with Simon of Cyrene is covered in all the Gospel accounts except John (Matt. 27:32, Mark 15:21, Luk. 23:26). Cyrene is northern coastal town in what is modern-day Libya, far west of Egypt, 1,148 miles west of Jerusalem. To be “of Cyrene” meant he was born in Cyrene. At some point, I suspect he moved to live in the country near Jerusalem. Luke makes the point that he was just “*coming out of the country*” (Luke 23:26). He had just arrived from the country into Jerusalem for the Passover.

After that long journey, he shows up in Jerusalem and what happens to him? He is immediately confronted with the tortured, bloody, Messiah of Israel falling down right in front of him because He cannot physically carry His cross up Golgotha’s Hill.

A Roman soldier compels Simon to help Christ bear His cross up that hill.

Next, Luke would tell us, “*And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him*” (Luke 23:27). With Simon giving Jesus some relief by helping Him carry the crossarm, I suspect it was at this moment that Jesus found the strength to speak to the people.

“*But Jesus turning unto them said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?’*” (Luk 23:28-31).

The Lord clearly has Daniel’s 70th week in view here, which requires little in the way of exegesis but what did the Lord mean when He said in Luke 23:31, “*For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*” Daniel’s 70th week is Israel’s baptism of fire, which John the Baptist referenced in Matt. 3:11-12. The wet, green trees naturally resist the fire, but the dry ones burn up. He’s telling the women to weep not for Him but rather, weep for those who will burn up during the Tribulation for unbelief because judgment is surely coming.

¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 13.

¹⁶ Edwards, William D. “On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ,” [Journal of American Medical Association](#). April, 1986.

¹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 14.

He Arrives at Golgotha

When they arrive at Golgotha, Matthew and Mark highlight that they offered Jesus a drink of vinegar mixed with gall (Matt. 27:34, Mark 15:23), which was a fulfillment of prophecy. David wrote in Psa. 69:21, *“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”* Webster’s 1828 tells us that gall is “a yellowish green fluid, secreted in the glandular substance of the liver.”

Following this, Matthew and Mark wrote that they stripped Him of His clothes (Matt. 27:35, Mark 15:24), except for a loincloth, which had been allowed by the Jews. Dr. Davis writes that “when His clothes, which had already become adherent to the clots of blood and serum in His wounds, is torn from His back, this causes excruciating pain, just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage.”¹⁸

Then they cast lots. This was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Psa. 22:18, *“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”* Matthew would actually quote that verse in Matt. 27:35, which would have been our first indication that Psa. 22 was all about the inner thoughts and feelings of the Lord Jesus Christ during His crucifixion.

This is also the beginning of all the mocking. First, Matt. 27:36 would tell us that the people sat down to watch Him. Even in such a small detail as that, you can’t help but think of the prophesy of Isa 53:4, *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”*

We find in Mar. 15:29-32, *“And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, ‘Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross.’ Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, ‘He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.’ And they that were crucified with him reviled him.”* We’d read similar accounts in Matt. 27:39-44 and Luke 23:35-37.

I’d suggest that all of this mocking was a fulfillment of Psa. 22:6-8, *“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”*

Plus, we also have in this moment the fulfillment of Isa 53:3. *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”*

Nailed to the Cross

After this, Christ is nailed to the cross. In this moment, we have the fulfillment of Psa. 22:16 in which David wrote, *“For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.”* Dogs were the Gentiles, of course, and He was

¹⁸ Ibid. Pg. 14

surrounded by them. Interesting, that David prophesied the piercing of the Lord's hands and feet 1,000 years before death by crucifixion had even been invented! Is it not jaw-dropping how that method of death was unknown to anyone when Psalm 22 was written?

Dr. Davis writes that "Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. (Crucifixes today show the nails through the palms. Roman historical accounts have shown that the nails were driven between the small bones of the wrists and not through the palms. Nails driven through the palms will strip out between the fingers when they support the weight of a human body. The misconception may have come about through a misunderstanding of Jesus' words to Thomas, 'Observe my hands.' Anatomists, both modern and ancient, have always considered the wrists as part of the hand.) The legionnaire drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood.... The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The Victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms—the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again, there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet. As the arms fatigue, waves of cramps knot them in deep, relentless pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed, and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs but cannot be exhaled.... Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the lifegiving oxygen."¹⁹

Then Jesus speaks. "*Then said Jesus, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And they parted his raiment, and cast lots*" (Luke 23:34). The fact that we have the Lord's prayer next to this statement about the Roman soldiers parting His garments may well mean that the Lord was speaking of the Roman soldiers and not the people of Israel. His own people *knew* He was innocent. The Roman soldiers, on the other hand, were legitimately ignorant.

Lifted Up

Mark 15:25 would tell us that it was the third hour when He was crucified, meaning He was nailed to the cross and then lifted up. The third hour would be about 9:00 a.m., three hours after sunrise. His time on that cross would roughly encompass six hours. He would be in the tomb before sundown on that Wednesday. The new day, Thursday, would begin around 6 p.m. after sundown, which was the practice at that time in the Jewish calendar. Thus, Christ would be buried three days and three nights. He would arise at some point after sundown Saturday evening and before sunrise Sunday morning.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid. Pg. 14

²⁰ I always found [this chart](#) to be helpful.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke would explain that there were also two thieves, all saying “*the one on his right hand, and the other on his left*” (Matt. 27:38, Mark 15:27, Luke 23:33). Mark highlights that this is a fulfillment of Isa. 53:12, and he quotes part of that verse. The full verse of Isa. 53:12 reads, “*Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*” Many have suggested that this moment also fulfills Isa. 53:9 in which we read, “*And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*”



Painting by Rembrandt, “The Crucifixion,” 1646

The Inscription

Next, we would learn about the inscription. John writes, “*And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, ‘Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.’ Pilate answered, ‘What I have written I have written’” (Joh. 19:19-22). Luke would also write about this inscription in Luke 23:38, but the wording is different. Luke writes that the inscription said, “*written**

over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew,” were the words, “*THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*”

I suspect there were three inscriptions in total. One inscription in one language would have been translated as “*JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.*” Another inscription in

another language would have been translated as *"THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."* Both accounts would be correct.

At this point, the Roman soldiers split up the garments of Jesus. *"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, 'Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be': that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, 'They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.' These things therefore the soldiers did"* (Joh. 19:23-24).

Baker would write, "The soldiers who crucified Jesus divided His garments among themselves, and there must have been four of them, for John says, *'they took His garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part,'* but since His robe was seamless, they threw dice for it. David, a thousand years before, had predicted these soldiers would do this very thing..."²¹ That verse is Psa. 22:18, *"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."*

How can anyone put into words the astonishing accuracy of David's prophecy?

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, 'Woman, behold thy son!' Then saith he to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (Joh. 19:25-27). Baker writes that "John alone records the conversation of Jesus with His mother from the Cross. She was standing there with John and several other women. The words spoken by Simeon over thirty years before must have been running through Mary's mind..."²²

He then cites Luke 2:34-35. That was the moment when the baby Jesus had been brought to the temple. Luke wrote that *"Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, 'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed'"* (Luke 2:34-35). A chilling prophecy. I suspect Baker may be right. No doubt those words haunted Mary and may well have come to her mind at Calvary. Mary had always known that something horrific like this would come to pass for her Son.

Baker also wrote, "When Jesus uttered the words, *'Woman, behold thy son,'* He was not referring to Himself, but to the Apostle John, for He then said to John, *'Behold thy mother,'* and from that hour John took her unto his own home. Even in death Jesus was concerned about others, rather than Himself."²³ Pastor Richard Jordan has on occasion made the point in his sermons that this moment illustrates the Little Flock ministering to Israel in His stead. Even in death, Christ cared about others above Himself.²⁴

²¹ Baker, Charles F. "The Crucifixion," Understanding the Gospels. Pg. 229.

²² Ibid. Pg. 230.

²³ Ibid. Pg. 230.

²⁴ Jordan, Richard. Shorewood Bible Church, [YouTube](#).

The Sixth Hour – Noon

Just before we arrive at the sixth hour, which is noon, Luke tells us, *“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, ‘If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.’*

“But the other answering rebuked him, saying, ‘Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.’ And he said unto Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.’

“And Jesus said unto him, ‘Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise’” (Luke 23:39-43).

What was it that the thief believed that got him saved? When he was hanging on his own cross, was he thinking, “Oh, Christ is in the process of paying for all the sins of the world? He’s going to die. He’s going to be buried, and He’s going to be resurrected as a full substitutionary atoning work for all my sins and I’m going to trust in that to get eternal life?” How could the thief know that Christ was paying for the sins of the world when no one knew that, not John the Baptist, not the twelve disciples, and not even the demonic realm?

Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 2:8, *“Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”* The thief simply believed that Christ was the Messiah, which was the gospel during the Lord’s earthly ministry (Joh. 3:15-18). This is not the gospel that Paul preached, which was faith in the Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection as a payment for all sins (1 Cor. 15:1-4) by which we receive eternal life from the Father.

We arrive at the sixth hour, noon, and darkness falls. Matthew writes, *“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour”* (Mat. 27:45). We would also read about this in Mark 15:33 and Luke 23:44.

Dr. Davis writes, “Hours of this pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rendering cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber.”²⁵

Spiritual Torture

By this point, the spiritual torment to His soul by the demonic realm must have kicked into high gear. We had read in Psa. 22:2, *“O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.”* The Lord silently cried to His father in His mind throughout this entire ordeal, and although His Father refused to answer, we would read in Psa. 22:3 that the Lord also never stopped thinking about His Father’s perfect holiness. *“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”* I wonder if the Lord focusing upon the holiness of His Father in Heaven comforted Him for why He was suffering on that cross.

²⁵ Ibid. Pg. 14

In Psa. 22:12, we had learned about the bulls of Bashan. David wrote, *“Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.”* The bulls of Bashan were these wild powerful uncontrollable bulls in the city of Bashan. Some have speculated, and I would agree, that in Psa. 22:12, the spiritual curtain has been pulled back for us, and in the spiritual realm wild powerful uncontrollable demons, who like the bulls of Bashan in character, were all circling the cross tormenting the soul of the Lord Jesus Christ.

David would also write in Psa. 22:21, in which the Lord is thinking, *“Save me from the lion's mouth...”* Of course, we know who that is. 1 Pet. 5:8, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”* The devil was there in the spiritual realm at the cross tormenting His soul, along with all the demonic realm, and the Lord begged in His mind to His Father to be saved from the roaring lion's mouth.

Just before we reach the ninth hour, we find in Mat. 27:46, *“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is to say, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’”* This is also recorded in Mark 15:34.

Because He spoke those words in Aramaic some mistakenly thought the Lord was calling out for Ellijah (Matt. 27:47, Mark 15:35).

By saying those words, the Lord Himself points us all back to Psalm 22 so that we may know that Psalm 22 reveals to us all what He's thinking and feeling while He's dying on the cross and that His death was a perfect fulfillment of prophecy. He also quotes that Psalm so we may know that He was forsaken of God the Father, abandoned, cut off, fellowship with the Father broken for the first time since eternity past, because the Father cannot have any fellowship with sin while the sins of the world were being imputed to His Son.

I'm reminded of Isa 53:6, *“...the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* And also of Isa 53:10-11, *“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”* Again in Isa. 53:8, we find, *“for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”* He was forsaken by the Father. He was being made to be sin for us to take on the consequence of all our transgressions.

Christ tasted the second death for every man, which is separation from God (Rev. 20:14). God abandoned His Son on the cross so that none of us may ever be abandoned when we place our faith in Him (Eph. 1:13-14).

The Ninth Hour – 3 o'clock

We arrive at the ninth hour. Dr. Davis writes, *“Hours of this pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rendering cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins; a crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart... It is now almost over; the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level.*

The compressed heart is struggling to pump. The tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. A sponge soaked in cheap, sour wine is lifted to His lips. He apparently doesn't take any of the liquid. The body of Jesus is now in extremis, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. This realization brings out His words... *'It is finished.'*"²⁶

First, the "sponge soaked in cheap, sour wine". We read in Joh. 19:28-29, *"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, 'I thirst.' Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth."*

"I thirst" is a fulfillment of Psa. 22:15, *"My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws..."* Baker wrote that "Psa. 22 gives a vivid description of His physical sufferings, but the spiritual experience of darkness and thirst must have far outweighed the physical."²⁷ I wonder if it may be possible that when Jesus spoke of His thirst, He wanted to drink again of the fellowship, the holiness, and the righteousness of the Spirit and His Father in Heaven.

John 19:30 tells us, *"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished': and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost"* (c.f., Matt. 27:48-50, Mark 15:36-37). Luke wrote *"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit': and having said thus, he gave up the ghost"* (Luke 23:46). Mark would write *"And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost"* (Mar. 15:37).

Dr. Davis writes, "His mission of redemption has been completed. Finally, He can allow His body to die. With one last surge of strength, He once again presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His last cry, *'Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.'*"²⁸

William Edwards, writing for JAMA, also concluded that "The major pathophysiologic effect of crucifixion was an interference with normal respirations. Accordingly, death resulted primarily from hypovolemic shock and exhaustion asphyxia." In fact, they would also go on to say that "Other possible contributing factors included dehydration, stress-induced arrhythmias, and congestive heart failure with the rapid accumulation of pericardial and perhaps pleural effusions. Crucifraction (breaking the legs below the knees), if performed, led to an asphyxic death within minutes. Death by crucifixion was, in every sense of the word, excruciating (Latin, *excruciat*, or 'out of the cross')." ²⁹

Baker writes that "His seventh and final cry was: *'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,'* and having said this, He yielded up His spirit. We remember the words of Jesus in John 10:17,18: *'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.'*"³⁰

²⁶ Ibid. Pg. 15.

²⁷ Ibid. Pg. 230.

²⁸ Ibid. Pg. 15.

²⁹ Edwards, William D. "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," [Journal of American Medical Association](#). April, 1986.

³⁰ Ibid. Pg. 231.

“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent...” (Mat. 27:51).

What’s the significance of the veil being torn apart? The veil of the temple was the curtain through which the priests would pass to enter the Holiest of Holies. That veil was ripped apart from top to bottom. H.A. Ironside writes, “The veil of the temple signified that no man could pass into the presence of God except as in the case of the high priest on the day of atonement, and that, ‘not without blood.’ But when Christ died as the propitiation for sin the way was opened up into the Holy of holies. Now God can come out in unhindered love to man, and man can go into God's presence, accepted in Christ. The rent veil speaks of redemption accomplished.”³¹ Then he quotes Heb 10:19 in which we read, *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus...”*³²

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many” (Mat. 27:52-53)

Why did the resurrection of all these people happen? This not only proved once again that Christ was the Son of God, but this was also proof of Christ’s victory over death itself seeing others now resurrected, which gave everyone hope, and foreshadowed the resurrection to come upon His Second Advent.

Then we find in Mat. 27:54, *“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God’”* (See also Mark 15:38-39, Luke 23:45,47).

His Side is Pierced

“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

“But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

“But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

“And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, ‘A bone of him shall not be broken.’ And again another scripture saith, ‘They shall look on him whom they pierced’” (Joh 19:31-37).

First, the reference to the blood and water flowing out of His side. How can this be explained? According to William Edwards, writing for JAMA, “...the water probably represented

³¹ Ironside, H.A. “Address 77 - Christ Crucified and the Veil Rent”, Luke 23. Page 7.

³² Ibid. Pg. 7-8.

serous pleural and pericardial fluid, and would have preceded the flow of blood and been smaller in volume than the blood. Perhaps in the setting of hypovolemia and impending acute heart failure, pleural and pericardial effusions may have developed and would have added to the volume of apparent water. The blood, in contrast, may have originated from the right atrium or the right ventricle or perhaps from a hemopericardium.”³³

Second, the reference to the Sabbath. The Jewish rulers requested that the bodies be removed from the crosses before evening began because the next day was Sabbath. This wasn't Friday and they're not talking about Saturday. During the week of Passover, Thursday is called a Sabbath day, which simply means in the Hebrew "to rest," because Thursday was the day the paschal feast properly commenced. This was a day of rest. Because of this, the soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals, but they were surprised to find Jesus was already dead. Therefore, they did not break His legs, but a soldier pierced His side with a spear and out came blood and water.

All of this fulfilled Scripture. David wrote in Psa. 22:14, *"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."*

He also wrote in Psa. 34:20, *"He keepeth all His bones; not one of them is broken."* We also find in Zech. 12:10, *"And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced."*

Who but God could have perfectly prophesied these moments?

The Women

We read in Mat. 27:55-56, *"And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children."* (c.f., Mark 15:40-41). It is thought that these women who boldly stuck with Christ when all the men and most of the disciples ran away, if they had ministered to Christ during His life, then they likely continued to minister to Him in His death, too, possibly by helping bring His body down from the cross.

"And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned" (Luke 23:48).

Notice how Luke wrote, *"all the people that came together to that sight."* All the people who were there. All of them. These are the very same people who had cried, *"Crucify him, crucify him."* These are the very same people who *"railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, 'Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross'"* (Mark 15:29-30). All the people!

And now, because of the darkness and the earthquake and the extraordinary manner of His death, *now* all the people were convicted about the truth. *Now* their mouths were stopped. *Now* their consciences pricked, and in remorse for what they had done, they *smote upon their*

³³ Edwards, William D. "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," [Journal of American Medical Association](#). April, 1986.

breasts. They beat themselves upon their own hearts. In other words, they had essentially beat themselves up in their own hearts for their roles in this wicked murder of their Messiah.

All of this brings us back to Psalm 22. Consider the last 10 verses.

22 "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. 23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. 24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. 25 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. 26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. 27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. 29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. 30 A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. 31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this."

(Psa. 22:22-31)

Notice in verses 22-31 how the abundant joy in Israel expands into all the world in His kingdom on Earth because of the great salvation of Jehovah. We find first in vs. 22, the praise declared "*unto my brethren,*" "*in the midst of the congregation.*" Then praise amongst "*all that fear Him,*" all "*the seed of Jacob,*" "*all the seed of Israel.*" In vs. 25, the praise of Him is declared "*in the great congregation,*" the great, holy temple of the Lord. Then in vs. 27, "*All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*" Thus, this Psalm, which begins with His agonizing suffering, ends in mighty glory, a glory yet to come for Israel and for all the nations of the Earth.

The first 21 verses about the sufferings of Christ were fulfilled some 2,000 years ago. But the glory to come in those last 10 verses may very well be within a few years.

Notice in vs. 31 that David wrote, "*They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*" Gaebelein pointed out that that phrase, "*he hath done this*" has the same connotation in Hebrew as what the Lord said on the cross when He cried out, "*It is finished.*"³⁴

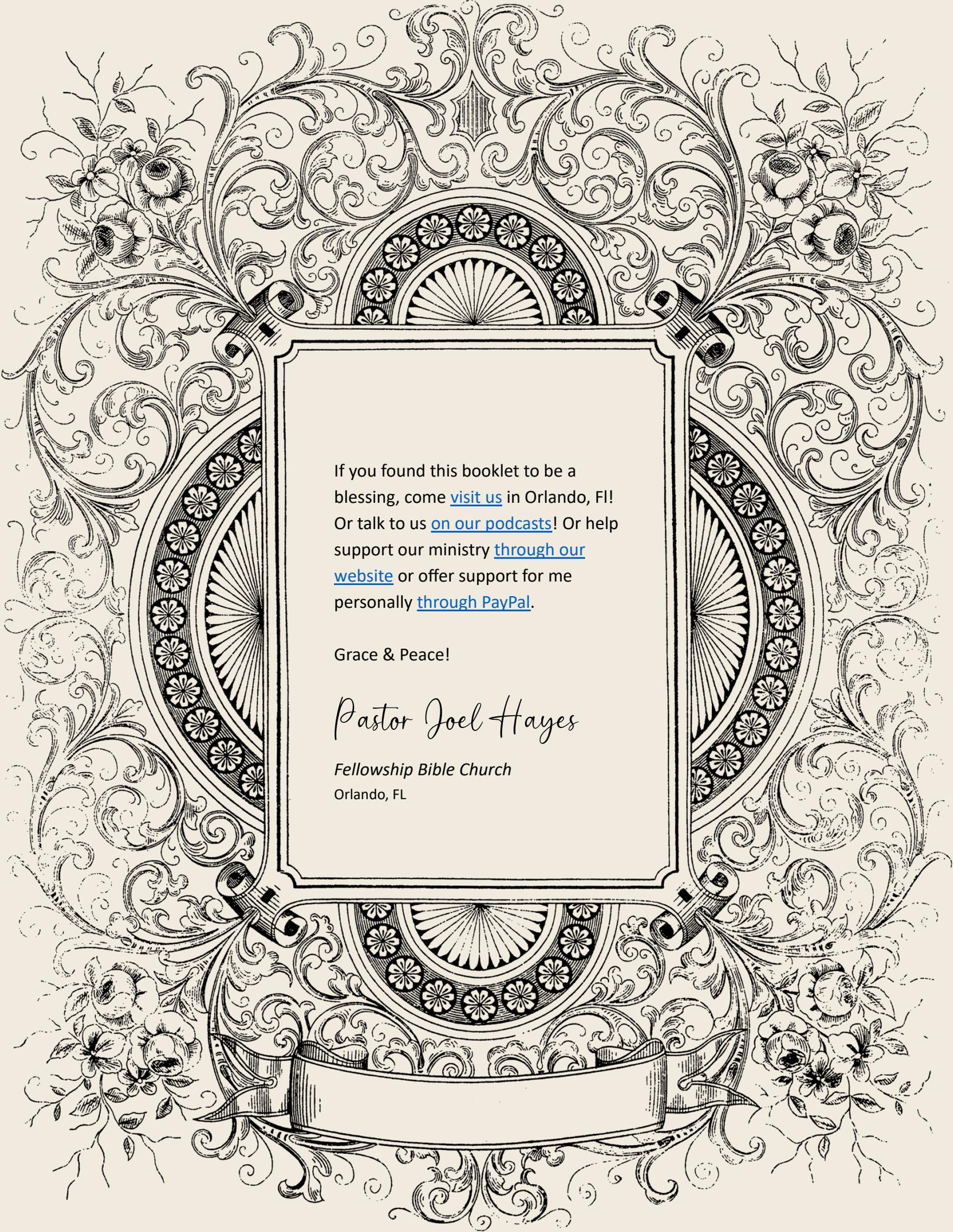
³⁴ Gaebelein, Arno C. "Psalm 22," The Book of Psalms. Page. 22

Gaebelein also wrote, "The precious, blessed, unfathomable work of the sin-bearer on the Cross and its far-reaching results in blessing and glory is here unfolded to our faith, as well as for our joy and comfort. The heart of the atonement occupies the foreground, not the physical sufferings, but the suffering He endured from the side of God, when He made Him who knew no sin, sin for us. 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'--But Thou art holy! That is the answer to the 'Why?' And when the blessed One was thus forsaken, and faced as the substitute of sinners the holy, sin-hating God, He finished the work, the work which enables God to be just and the justifier of all who believe in Jesus. 'It is finished!' was His triumphant shout... Still more astonishing are the details of His physical sufferings, which were all so minutely fulfilled on Calvary. Here we find foretold the piercing of hands and feet, the excessive thirst He suffered, the terrible agony by hanging suspended, every bone out of joint; the laughter and hooting of His enemies, the very expressions they used surrounding the cross are given here, and the dividing of the garments and casting lots and other details are prophetically revealed..."³⁵ He says, "What... evidence of divine inspiration!"³⁶

We'll close with one more fulfilled prophecy: Isa 53:5, "*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*"

³⁵ Ibid. Pg. 22

³⁶ Ibid. Pg. 23.

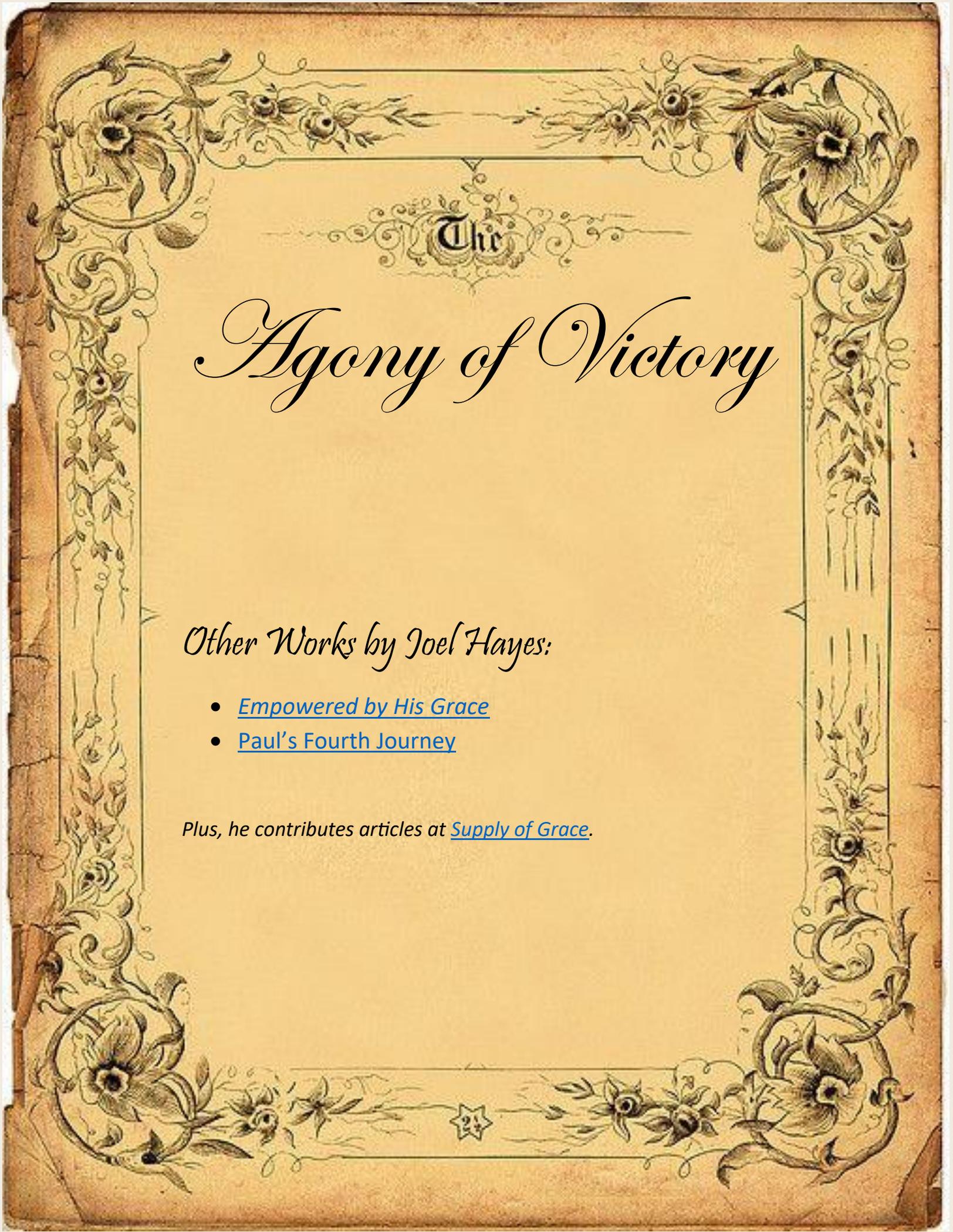


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